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Letter dated 26 September 2023 from the Representative of Cuba to the United Nations (Group of 77 and China) addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Havana Declaration on Current Development Challenges: the Role of Science, Technology and Innovation, adopted at the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China, held in Havana, Cuba, on 15 and 16 September 2023 (see annex).



On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would appreciate having the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 28, 134 and 135.

(*Signed*) Pedro Luis **Pedroso Cuesta**

Ambassador
Special Representative and Coordinator for the
Cuban Presidency of the Group of 77 and China

Annex to the letter dated 26 September 2023 from the Representative of Cuba to the United Nations (Group of 77 and China) addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic, English, French and Spanish]

Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China on Current Development Challenges: the Role of Science, Technology and Innovation

**Havana, Cuba
September 15–16, 2023**

Havana Declaration on Current Development Challenges: the Role of Science, Technology and Innovation

1. We, the Heads of State and Government of the member countries of the Group of 77 and China, meeting in Havana, Cuba, on September 15 and 16, 2023, for the Group's Summit on Current Development Challenges: The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation, convinced of the urgent need to act together, reaffirm our full adherence to the spirit, principles and objectives of the Group of 77 and China.
2. We also reaffirm the commitment to strengthen the unity and solidarity of the Group in order to achieve its objectives and to reinforce its role in the current international context. We reaffirm full respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.
3. We deeply mourn the loss of life and materials caused by the recent natural disasters in Libya and Morocco. We convey our heartfelt condolences to the respective peoples and governments, and to the loved ones of the victims in both nations.
4. We note with deep concern that the major challenges generated by the current unfair international economic order for developing countries have reached their most acute expression in current times due, inter alia, to the persistent negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, even though the Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) for COVID-19 has been lifted by the WHO, geopolitical tensions, unilateral coercive measures, and the current multiple crises, including the economic and financial crises, fragile global economic outlook, increased pressure on food, energy, displacement of people, markets volatility, inflation, monetary tightening, the growing burden of external debt, the increase in extreme poverty, the rising inequalities within and among countries, and the adverse effects of climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, sand and dust storms and environmental degradation, as well as the digital divides, with no clear roadmap so far to address these global problems.
5. We also express deep concern at the illness, death, and continued socio-economic disruption and devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic which has further exacerbated the stark inequities within and among countries and regions, with a disproportionate impact on developing countries. This has brought urgency to strengthen global solidarity and international cooperation in and support for developing countries to prevent, prepare for, and respond to pandemics and other health emergencies, taking into account lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.
6. We stress the urgent need for a comprehensive reform of the international financial architecture and a more inclusive and coordinated approach to global financial governance, with greater emphasis on cooperation among countries,

including through increasing the representation of developing countries in global decision and policy-making bodies which will contribute to enhance the capacities of developing countries to access and develop science, technology and innovation.

7. We reiterate the firm belief that all states and stakeholders should devote themselves collectively to the pursuit of global development and “win-win” cooperation for scientific and technological development on the basis of extensive consultations, joint contributions and shared benefits, which can bring huge gains to all countries and all parts of the world in building a community of shared future for humankind.

8. We reject the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions against developing countries, and reiterate the urgent need to eliminate them immediately. We emphasize that such actions not only undermine the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, but also severely impede the advancement of science, technology and innovation and the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries.

9. Furthermore, we emphasize that unilateral coercive measures have negative and devastating impacts on the realization of human rights including the right to development and the right to food. Those measures also hinder the access of the affected countries to health-care, humanitarian assistance and equipment, and nationally owned assets.

10. We reject technological monopolies and other unfair practices that hinder the technological development of developing countries. States which have monopoly and dominance in the Information and Communication Technologies environment, including Internet, should not use Information and Communication Technologies advances as tools for containment and suppression of the legitimate economic and technological development of other States. We call upon the international community to foster an open, fair, inclusive and non-discriminatory environment for scientific and technological development.

11. We note with concern that at the half-way point of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the world, particularly the developing countries, are still far off track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We further note that science, technology and innovation have been identified as levers for transformation to accelerate progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and that its strategic deployment has the potential to resolve and minimize trade-offs among the Goals and targets, and recognizes that technology transfer to developing countries will be critical to scale up and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

12. We stress the important role of science, technology and innovation as pillars, enablers and catalysts to support sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth, accelerating the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and, in this context, reaffirm the need for political decision-making at all levels to create an enabling international environment for science, technology and innovation development and to take into account, in the first instance, available scientific knowledge and innovation, as well as the use and promotion of traditional, local, afro-descendant and indigenous knowledge and capacities.

13. We reaffirm the 2005 Tunis Agenda for the Information Society in which the special and specific funding needs of the developing world were recognized and encourage close alignment between the World Summit on the Information Society process and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, highlighting the cross-cutting contributions of information and communications technology to the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the eradication of poverty in all its

forms and dimensions, and noting that access to information and communications technologies has also become a development indicator and aspiration in and of itself.

14. We also call for a close correspondence of the World Summit on the Information Society process with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and other outcomes of relevant intergovernmental processes, including the Global Digital Compact and the Summit of the Future. We agree to work towards a strong and concerted position of the G-77 and China to ensure that the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20) General Review process, the Global Digital Compact and the Summit of the Future contribute to, inter alia, the achievement of sustainable development and closing the digital divide between developed and developing countries.

15. We reiterate that the Tunis Agenda and the Geneva Declaration of Principles and plan of action shall lay down the guiding principles for digital cooperation.

16. We recognize the opportunity offered by science, technology and innovation for the full enjoyment of human rights by all, including the right to development. We call for the advancement of digital inclusion, as well as the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and to strengthen their full, equal and meaningful access and participation in these fields, including through the participation of women in scientific and technological processes, as a means to closing the gender digital divide, addressing the risks and challenges emerging from the use of technologies and ensuring that the benefits of these technologies are available to all, including women and girls.

17. We agree on the need to invest more in science, technology and innovation and to implement initiatives at all levels for the development of human resources in these fields. We stress the importance to develop strategies aimed at confronting the brain drain of specialized human resources trained in the countries of the South. We agree to continue to promote young people's interest in scientific studies, including the educational sphere.

18. We reaffirm our commitment to open and equitable scientific collaboration, and recognize the important contributions that open science makes in the development of solutions to address global challenges. In that regard, we encourage actions to foster the uptake of scientific evidence into policymaking processes.

19. We recognize the important contributions which the knowledge produced by research and innovation activities can have in designing better public policies, as well as the need to strengthen collaboration and exchanges between policymakers and scientific and technological communities to that end.

20. We encourage the promotion of science and innovation-based governance at national and local levels and the inclusion of this perspective in national development strategies, as integral and cross-cutting elements, as appropriate. We also call for the strengthening of science and innovation ecosystems connecting national and local governments, the public and private sectors, academia, research centers and civil society, taking into account national legislation and contexts.

21. We express our willingness to support the expansion of open-science models, at all levels, to ensure citizens' access to research results and scientific information, in order to make science and knowledge accessible to everyone.

22. We advocate for the development and use of science, technology and innovation ethically and responsibly, and the strengthening and expansion of research and development infrastructures.

23. We recognize that intellectual property rights should contribute to the promotion of technological innovation in a way that favors social and economic welfare taking into account national laws, and call for applying the flexibilities enshrined in relevant

international legal obligations in the field of intellectual property rights, where applicable.

24. We acknowledge the contribution of science to the creation of innovative technologies and solutions to move towards more sustainable production and consumption patterns. In that context, we call for the provision of the necessary means of implementation to developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacities. We further note the need to raise awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in accordance with the commitments contained in the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, we will endeavor to further promote close linkages and partnerships between policy makers, academia, research centers and the private sector, as appropriate.

25. We further acknowledge the contribution of science, technology and innovation to industrial development in developing countries and as a critical source of economic growth, economic diversification and value addition.

26. We call for the promotion of new research, the development and transfer of the necessary technologies, and access to the existing ones, including in the areas of food and nutrition, health, water and sanitation, and energy, in order to contribute to the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, and the achievement of sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, human wellbeing and sustainable development.

27. We note the central role of Governments, with the active contribution from stakeholders from the private sector, civil society, academia and research institutions, in creating and supporting an enabling environment at all levels, including enabling regulatory and governance frameworks, in accordance with national priorities, to nurture science, innovation, entrepreneurship and the dissemination of knowledge and technologies, particularly to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as industrial diversification and value added to commodities.

28. We emphasize the importance of research, and technology development and transfer in the field of human health, taking into account the increase in emerging and re-emerging communicable and non-communicable diseases, including their risk factors.

29. We call upon the international community and relevant bodies of the United Nations system to take urgent action to promote unhindered, timely and equitable access for developing countries to health-related measures, products and technologies necessary to deal with the current and future pandemic prevention preparedness and responses. These include through financing, health systems strengthening, building capacity, ensuring sustainability of supply chains, technology transfer and know-how for local and regional manufacturing and production of medical countermeasures, including medicines, vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics, health technologies and other health products in developing countries.

30. We recognize the role of science, technology and innovation in identifying and addressing the challenges posed by climate change, the effects of which disproportionately impact developing countries. We acknowledge that all technological barriers, inter alia, as reported by the IPCC, limit adaptation to climate change and the implementation of the National Determined Contributions (NDCs) of developing countries. We reiterate, in this regard, the need for an effective response to the urgent threat of climate change especially through scaling up the provision of financing, technology transfer and capacity building based on the needs and priorities of developing countries, in accordance with the principles and the objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris

Agreement, including equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, as well as on the basis of the best available science.

31. We recognize that information and communication technologies are a key catalyst and enablers for sustainable development. We reaffirm the vision of building an inclusive, people-centered and development-oriented information society. We call upon the international community and relevant bodies of the United Nations system to take urgent action aimed at reducing digital divides and inequalities in data generation, infrastructure and accessibility within and among countries and regions, as well as between developed and developing countries, with special attention to the poorest and most vulnerable among them. We urge the creation of the necessary conditions to provide developing countries with affordable and reliable connectivity, aimed, *inter alia*, at promoting digital access and inclusion, including for people in remote and rural communities, as well as to ensure ethical, reliable, and more equitable development, access and use of artificial intelligence.

32. We note with deep concern the existing disparities between developed and developing countries in terms of conditions, possibilities and capacities to produce new scientific and technological knowledge. We call upon the international community, the United Nations System and the International Financial Institutions to support the efforts of the countries of the South to develop and strengthen their national science, technology and innovation systems. We urge developed countries to urgently mobilize means of implementation such as technology transfer, technical assistance, capacity building and financing through new, additional, and predictable resources in relation to the needs of developing countries, including in this area, in accordance with their national needs, policies and priorities.

33. We recognize that no restrictions should be imposed on developing countries' access to Information and Communication Technologies' materials, equipment and technology in order to maintain sustainable development.

34. We further recognize the importance of assisting developing countries to address the challenges and opportunities related to the use of Internet and the e-commerce to develop their international trade capacities, among other things.

35. We support the advancement and implementation of specific and targeted innovation policies aiming at driving sustainable economic growth and the creation of new job opportunities for the current and future generations.

36. We reiterate the crucial role of Official Development Assistance in supporting the development needs of the countries of the South and insist on the urgent need for developed countries to fulfill their historical commitment in this regard.

37. We stress the importance of strengthening North-South cooperation, including through the fulfillment of Official Development Assistance commitments to support the development needs of the countries of the South. At the same time, we agree to continue working on the development of science and technology in developing countries by strengthening South-South cooperation, which is necessary to optimize our potential and complement our resources and expertise, while offering viable pathways to address common challenges among developing countries and to, *inter alia*, accelerate progress in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We encourage discussions on the possibilities of establishing new platforms for South-South cooperation and exchanges on science, technology and innovation.

38. We further encourage the promotion of triangular cooperation projects and programs to improve developing countries' access to more and better resources for the implementation of technical and scientific initiatives. We acknowledge that triangular cooperation is aimed at facilitating, supporting and enhancing South-South initiatives, through the provision of, *inter-alia*, funding, capacity-building, technology

transfer as well as other forms of support, at the request of developing countries, in line with the principles of South-South cooperation, and must be led by the countries of the South.

39. We recognize that an international technology framework including the Global Digital Compact, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, should be considered, which should offer preferential access for developing countries to relevant advanced technologies, develop their productive capacities and end discriminatory restrictions, and focus on global research and development on scientific breakthroughs relevant to the Sustainable Development Goals.

40. We recognize the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships to foster strategic long-term investment in supporting the development of science, technology and innovation in developing countries, including through innovative financing.

41. We reaffirm our decision to resume the work of the Consortium on Science, Technology and Innovation for the South (COSTIS), and urge the members of the Group to evaluate and outline strategies to ensure its effective functioning.

42. We agree that our Ministers or High Authorities on Science, Technology and Innovation meet regularly, as appropriate, to take stock of the role of science, technology and innovation in the development agendas adopted at the United Nations and to strengthen South-South cooperation in this fields.

43. We urge the United Nations Regional Commissions, Agencies, Funds and Programs, in particular UNDP, UNESCO, UNCTAD, UNIDO, ITU and the UN Office for South-South Cooperation, within their respective mandates, to make additional efforts to support developing countries in strengthening institutional frameworks and public policies related to science, technology and innovation.

44. We agree to request the President of the General Assembly to convene, in the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, a High-Level Event on Science, Technology and Innovation for Development with a special focus on actions to be taken to address the needs of developing countries in these fields.

45. We reaffirm our commitment to implement the concrete measures contained in this Declaration at the national and international levels.

46. We agree to declare September 16 as the Day of Science, Technology and Innovation in the South.

47. We express our gratitude to the government of the Republic of Cuba, Chair of the Group of 77 and China, for the organization and development of this Summit. We trust that this meeting will set a guideline for our actions in these times of huge challenges and will allow us to advance toward the realization of our legitimate aspirations for development.
